

Part 7 – July 25, 2010

Love on Cruise Control vs. Loving God Full Speed

Intro

- Do you ever struggle with the first, and great commandment--"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."? What does that struggle look like?

Matthew 22:36-40

- *Shema* (Hebrew)-The Jewish prayer from the books of Moses that begins with the word "Hear"-Shema means "Hear"

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

How To Love God

- Two key words: "love and _____"

**Deuteronomy 11:13-21; Deuteronomy 19:9; Deuteronomy 30:6, 8;
Deuteronomy 30:19-20; Numbers 15:37-41**

Aheb (*Hebrew*)-The Hebrew word for love from the **commandments** to love in the *Shema*, ***Aheb*** means "A determined act of the mind and will-the determined care for the welfare of someone, marked by its dedication and its commitment of choice-a love that recognizes, learns and chooses to follow what is righteous and noble and true, no matter what feelings a person might have. It is the rough equivalent of *Agapao*-a Greek word for a love that involves every part of our being.

Meditating on Him	[Psalm 18:1-3]
Trusting His power	[Psalm 31:23]
Seeking His fellowship	[Psalm 63:1-8]
Loving His law	[Psalm 119:165]
Caring How He Feels	[Psalm 69:9]
Loving What He loves	[Psalm 119:72, 97, 103]
Loving Whom He Loves	[1 John 5:1]
Hating What He Hates	[Psalm 97:10]
Grieving over sin	[Matthew 26:75]
Rejecting the world	[1 John 2:15]
Longing to be with C h r i s t	[2 Timothy 4:8]
Obeying God Wholeheartedly	[John 14:21]

John 14:15; John 14:23; 1 John 5:3

Cruise-Control Obedience

"If we are too extreme, you know, in living a life of loving God by learning and obeying His commands that will alienate us from many of the people we will have to deal with in our everyday lives. Often it will alienate us from brothers and sisters in Christ."

Is that too strong a statement?

Fanatic? Or Go with the flow?

Race-Car Obedience

*"If we are to **love** God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, we must **obey** Him the same way."*

1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Hebrews 12:14; 2 Peter 1:5-7

"God is not impressed with our worship on Sunday morning in church if we are practicing 'cruise-control' obedience the rest of the week."

All out effort? All out focus? All out intensity? All out commitment?

"We should delight in God. We should eagerly anticipate our times with Him. We should enjoy Him!"

Psalms 27:4 --A healthy view of God!

"[Jesus said] 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst' (John 6:35, RSV)

"The glory of bread is that it satisfies. The glory of living water is that it quenches thirst. We do not honor the refreshing, self-replenishing, pure water of a mountain spring by lugging buckets of water up the path to make our contributions from the ponds below. We honor the spring by feeling thirsty, getting down on our knees, and drinking with joy. Then we say, 'Ahhhh!' (that's worship!), and we go on our journey in the strength of the fountain (that's service). The mountain spring is glorified most when we are most satisfied with its water.

"This is the essence of what it means to love God-to be satisfied in Him. In Him! Loving God may include obeying all His commands; it may include believing all His Word; it may include thanking Him for all His gifts; but the essence of loving God is enjoying all He is. It is this enjoyment of God that glorifies His worth most fully, especially when all around our soul gives way.

"We all know this intuitively as well as from Scripture. Do we feel most honored by the love of

those who serve us from the constraints of duty, or from the delights of fellowship? My wife is most honored when I say, 'It makes me happy to spend time with you.' My happiness is the echo of her excellence. So it is with God. He is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.

"None of us has arrived at perfect satisfaction in God. I grieve often over the murmuring of my heart at the loss of worldly comforts, but I have tasted that the Lord is good. By God's grace I now know the fountain of everlasting joy, and so I love to spend my days luring people into joy until they say with me, 'One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple' (Psalm 27:4, RSV)." **John Piper**, *A Godward Life*, Vol. 1, pp. 23-4

Is Our Motive for the Pursuit Acceptable?

"Love is a verb—but it is also a noun."

Love = Obedience = Love = Obedience

"God does not want empty words or empty action; instead, He wants intelligent, feeling and willing action."

"What is love to God? Some reduce it to doing things in obedience to **God** because John 14:15 says, 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.' But that is not what the text says. It says that obedience will result from love. It does not say that obedience is love. Nor does 1 John 5:3 contradict this when it says, 'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments,' because the next phrase is to be taken with it: 'and his commandments are not burdensome.' In other words, love is not just the doing but the doing from a certain kind of heart that makes the doing 'not burdensome.'" **John Piper**, *A Godward Life*, p. 220

"Obedience is not the same as love. Obedience is just the way we express our love."

LOVE IS A VERB?

Ephesians 5:25; Matthew 5:44

LOVE IS A NOUN?

1 Corinthians 13:1-7

Bridges: **"Love always needs other verbs to give it hands and feet."**

Possible motives to "love our enemies":

1. So our enemy will be nice to us, not harm us;
2. To avoid God's punishment;
3. To gain God's blessing;
4. To be accepted in our Christian culture; or,
5. **Out of a love for God.**

"Fervent worship is sounding brass without fervent obedience."

Matthew 22:37

"[Christ] means by this that only the free service of our wills is acceptable to Him. Ultimately the man who comes to obey God will love Him first... Let us therefore learn that the love of God is the beginning of religion, for God will not have the forced obedience of men, but wishes their service to be free and spontaneous... Lastly we learn that God does not linger over the outward sign of achievement but chiefly searches the inner disposition [motive], that from a good root good fruits may grow."

Bridges quoting John Calvin, *The Discipline of Grace*, p. 120

Do you think God cares more about our motives for obedience than He cares for the level of our performance of obedience?

What do you think about Bridges' statement that: "A person who struggles with some persistent sin but does so out of love for God is more pleasing to Him than the person who has no such struggle but is proud of his or her self-control?"

Growing In Love

"[Speaking of Our Lord after He was whipped on the day of His crucifixion] Believer in Jesus, can you gaze upon Him without tears, as He stands before you the mirror of agonizing love? He is at once fair as the lily for innocence, and red as the rose with the crimson of His own blood. As we feel the sure and blessed healing which His wounds have accomplished in us, doesn't our heart melt at once with love and grief? If ever we have loved our Lord Jesus, surely we must feel that affection glowing now within our hearts.

'See how the patient Jesus stands, Insulted in His lowest case!
Sinners have bound the Almighty's hands And spit in their Creator's face.
With thorns His temples gor'd and gash'd Send streams of blood from every part;
His back's with knotted scourges lash'd. But sharper scourges tear His heart.'

We would prefer to go to our rooms and weep; but since our business calls us away, we will first ask our Beloved to print the image of His bleeding self upon the tablets of our hearts all day long, and at nightfall we will return to commune with Him, and grieve that our sin should have cost Him so dearly."

Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening*, March 31m

1 John 4:19; Romans 8:31-33; Galatians 4:17

"We cannot love God faithfully if we think we are under His judgment and condemnation!!"

Luke 7:47

"As God's creatures, we are all debtors to Him: to obey Him with all our body, and soul, and strength. Having broken His commandments, as we all have, we are

debtors to His justice, and we owe Him a vast amount which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian it can be said that he does not owe God's justice anything, for Christ has paid the debt His people owed; for this reason the believer owes the more to *love*. I am a debtor to God's grace and forgiving mercy; but I am no debtor to His justice, for He will never accuse me of a debt already paid. *** You are as deep in debt as you can be to ... God. To God you owe yourself, and all you have - yield yourself as a living sacrifice; this is your spiritual act of worship." (Emphasis added.)

Spurgeon, Morning and Evening, Feb. 3m

TO GROW IN LOVE--GO BACK TO THE CROSS--PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF!

Faith And Love

Hebrews 11:6

Matthew 22:37

Galatians 5:6

"THE GREATEST SORROW AND BURDEN YOU CAN LAY ON THE FATHER, THE GREATEST UNKINDNESS YOU CAN DO TO HIM IS NOT TO BELIEVE THAT HE LOVES YOU." Bridges, in *The Discipline of Grace*, p. 124, quoting John Owen

NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT

- Meditate on Psalm 127:1
- Read *The Discipline of Grace*, Chapter 8